

For myself, I have richly enjoyed *Vancouver*. A skilfully written, and a richly informative, revealing biography, it is the love offering of a man who still adores his subject in spite of violent changes wrought by the quick passage of time. The proof of this shines through his farewell chapter, "Discovery the Second." "Vancouver is still a pretty girl who uses the wrong make-up . . . she hasn't learned how to walk. And like many of today's young matrons, she's getting overdeveloped towards the south. But crack the facade of cheap cosmetic, the rouge of neon lights, let the sea breeze wash her face, and Vancouver sits as fair as any maid in her bath."

Thank you, Eric Nicol. To your darling you have paid genuine, and at times gracious tribute, and, in so doing, have contributed a worthy memorial to yet another provincial centennial year.

University of
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S. E. READ

Canada and the Canadians, by George Woodcock. Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1970. pp. 344, *Illus.* \$8.50.

George Woodcock is one of the few truly mid-Atlantic writers resident in Canada. His latest book takes much of its strength from this. Looking at his country from the inside, but also with the knowledge and feelings of one who has lived abroad and travelled widely for many years, Woodcock brings special advantages to his idiosyncratic account of Canada. Although he was born in Canada he was educated in England and did not return to this country until he was thirty-seven. By then (1949) he had published biographical studies of William Godwin and the seventeenth century novelist and playwright Aphra Ben, as well as three collections of verse. Within four more years he had brought out four more books — on such varied topics as Peter Kropotkin, Oscar Wilde, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and travels in the Northwest. Although he joined the English department of UBC in 1956 one has the impression that, if not an airport professor, he must have been a sampan or outrigger professor, for his continued wanderings resulted in a series of distinguished travel books on Latin America, India and Japan. Yet all of this activity after 1956 left him time to take on the editorship of *Canadian Literature*, to win a Governor-General's award for *The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell*, to write a notable historical study of anarchism, a book on the

Doukhobors (with Ivan Avakumovic), major essays on Richler and MacLennan, and a collection of other literary essays.

It is no surprise, then, to discover in *Canada and the Canadians* a book quite different from any of its predecessors in the various categories of books about Canada that we have become used to. It is not the cut-and-dried foreign observation which so often combines the sympathetic with the supercilious, nor is it an academic skimming of all the neatly arranged topics that one must talk about. Least of all is it a sweeping history suitable for the general reader and the classroom alike. Rather it is a sophisticated travel book of the sort Woodcock has written about other countries but richer because of his matured and critical Canadianism. And like all good travel books this one reveals not only its author's comparative experiences but also his own philosophy and scale of values. As a result it will both fascinate and disturb many readers.

The disturbance will proceed, I suspect, from the very muted notes of Woodcock's nationalism, from his intense interest in what has happened to the aborigines and to other ethnic minorities in the country (of which everyone belongs to one or another), from his pervasive mistrust of such things as authority, organization and the growth fetish, and from numberless personal predilections of which the most pronounced is a quite naked dislike of Toronto. His unresisted temptation to denigrate the Queen City is, indeed, the feature of his book which bears most resemblance to books on Canada by foreigners (or the various reflections of Frank Underhill). It might mark Woodcock himself as essentially "foreign" were it not counterbalanced by an equally uninhibited boosting of Vancouver. No one who has become an ardent B.C. regional patriot can be really un-Canadian — I hope.

While the various means adopted by Woodcock to elevate Vancouver in the Canadian urban hierarchy (there are not two, but three Canadian metropolitan centres) will be applauded on the lower Fraser and greeted indulgently in central Canada, this is the one point in his book at which he allows personal preference to pass into pique. This may be illustrated by his remark that

Toronto is the most hated city in Canada... The Augustan smugness of Toronto's academics arouses resentment in lesser Canadian universities, which often have better scholars, and the smart theatrical, artistic and literary journalists maintain an exasperating air of condescension toward other centres which are not lacking in genuine cultural life. The feeling between Vancouver and Toronto in this field is particularly sharp.

Apparently.

Yes, while this hypersensitivity results in a certain imbalance (the index, for example, has 24 notations for Toronto and 31 for Vancouver) in one sense it also results in a healthy redressing of the more usual 'balance' in which the "rags and ends of Confederation" frequently receive attention so scant as to be negligible. Certainly it leaves full scope for Woodcock to emphasize persuasively the profound regionalism of the country to which he then counterpoints the complex racial pattern of minorities. And it is in the regional and racial patterns that Woodcock perceives the real sources of difference between Americans and Canadians. Thus he writes:

Yet there are differences, and profound ones, between Canadians and Americans, and even between the kinds of life they live. To begin with, many Canadians have a clearly marked regional identity like nothing else in North America; no one would take a Quebecker or even a Newfoundlander for an American. His look, his speech, his manners distinguish him clearly. Then there are the multiple ties of a mixed ancestry. French Canadians harbour an attachment to France which in recent years has increased rather than diminished, and many British Columbians, Ontarians and Maritimers still preserve an attachment to Britain which one rarely finds among Americans, so that they sometimes choose to cultivate English accents and manners and to live for long periods in England, as many Canadian writers do (including, strangely enough, the Americanophile Richler).

So much for the grand sociological model-making of a McRae or a Hartz which would force us into the American-style "fragment" cast off from Europe and congealed forever in a "liberal" mould. The freshness of Woodcock's non-theoretical observations is therapeutic. Especially is this so when he underlines another racial fact which goes too often unnoticed: "... with the exception of Australia and New Zealand, Canada is still the most European country outside Europe; it even has a proportionately smaller non-European population than the United Kingdom, and it is the consciences of Canadians rather than the peace of the country that are disturbed by the demands for equality or its more exotic minorities."

While Woodcock stresses the overwhelmingly European character of the Canadian population, he also qualifies this observation, particularly in his excellent chapter on Culture and the Death of Colonialism. "Canadians," he writes, "having got rid of the idea that they are British or French in the European sense, are certainly not willing to consider themselves Americans. They recognize but resist outside influences that impinge upon them, and it is from this dialogue between influence and resistance that much of the vigour and variety and sophistication of

recent Canadian writing have emerged." It is in his depiction of the tensions in Canadian society that Woodcock most reveals his own Canadianism. Despite his anarchist's preference for loose-jointed pluralism he detects certain democratic weaknesses in federal-provincial and provincial-municipal relationships — weaknesses that are not always to the advantage of the governed. Again, while he celebrates our cultural pluralism he deplores its extreme or non-libertarian expressions. Thus he finds no difficulty in presenting a view of *separatisme* that could have come from the Prime Minister: "The separatists, like many other movements of extreme nationalism, are characterized by democratic protestations accompanied by an extremity of intolerance which gives their statements and actions a distinctly totalitarian flavour. . . . It is this desire to impose on others the very conditions of which they complain that robs the separatists of the sympathy of those English Canadians who otherwise might be inclined to support them, and which makes the Acadians almost universally anti-separatist." In some of his historical passages Woodcock sets aside anarchist preferences almost to the Creightonian vanishing point — except when he characterizes the punishment of Louis Riel as "judicial murder." "Canadian steadfastness," writes Woodcock of the 1860's, "was justified by events, and, once again, it was the threat from the south that brought the colonies together."

Yet the book remains highly personal throughout, a feature enhanced by the stimulating selection of non-professional photographs. Oddly, then, one's principal criticism (apart from the trivia of political attachments and too-hasty proof-reading) is that Woodcock should have resisted even more often than he did a tendency to lapse into fairly formal prose. For he is at his very best when writing off the cuff, as is demonstrated by a travel diary excerpt describing the clientele of the Yellowknife hotel:

. . . In the Yellowknife's dining room all northern types come together: the Canadians, and the immigrants who have made the north their own; the coarse old sweats, rotted by alcohol, and the other older men whom Arctic life has given a look of almost Gideon spareness and intensity; the young toughs with tight-arsed strut and chewed toothpicks, and the bearded young intellectuals of survey or photography teams, some very mod, with Dundreary whiskers under broad Stetsons; the Indians from the reserve at Rae, drunken women, sober, self-possessed young men, occasional children like the girl I saw this afternoon, who, with demonstrative delight, ate apple pie with ice cream, *followed* by chips well soured in ketchup. The girls at the desk affect an outdated flashiness that goes with the myth of mining camps; they wear high-piled hair, vivid makeup, sequined gowns, high-

heeled silver or red lacquer shoes; a suggestion of sin that in this age of the sexual revolution has lost its meaning.

After 75,000 miles of travel Woodcock's diary must be a treasure-house. His publisher should persuade him to prepare a not-too-heavily edited version of it. And to come to Toronto!

University of Toronto

KENNETH McNAUGHT

Continental Waterboy: The Columbia River Controversy, by Donald Waterfield. Toronto, Clarke Irwin & Co. Ltd., 1970. pp. 250. *Illus.* \$7.95.

Making comprehensive "water resource" development decisions which are in any sense "optimal" is notoriously difficult. The number of varied uses to which water and land may be put is considerable, often they are in conflict, and the public weighing of them changes over time. Some of the most significant values are intangible. A highly sophisticated analytical methodology has emerged during the last three decades to assist with the problem of choice here, but as Charles Schultze points out, paradoxically it is in just such fields as this one, where the efficiency partisan appears to have so much to offer, that the interplay of political forces limits most sharply its application. Construction costs for this type of development are hard to determine accurately, and frequently are so great as to make decisions, when taken, financially and politically (as well as ecologically), irreversible. Furthermore, quite unpredictable technological change suffuses the entire exercise with an additional and disturbing degree of uncertainty.

For these reasons, and others, the reworking of our past efforts in this field and the attempt to profit from perceived mistakes are highly desirable; hence one must welcome Mr. Waterfield's book. He writes gracefully and has a happy knack of putting the technically complex into basic English, and of interlacing the whole with a refreshing if, on occasions, cutting wit. He also is adept at evoking images of the beautiful Arrow Lakes country in which he lives, and argues well that we should be sensitive, nay hypersensitive, to the personal costs of social disruption, and extraordinarily loath to eliminate the beautiful in the natural environment. Few will disagree with his claim that if we have to consider such actions, we should take into account in our benefit-cost analyses all of the